# A STUDY OF REFERENCES TO MEDICINE IN LITERATURE IN TAMILNAD

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Howard Bentley declared in 1958 to Jurgen Thorwald author of The Science and Secrets of Early Medicine that a time will come, when the history of ancient Indian Medicine will be rewritten just as it has been necessary to revise the political history of the Indian subcontinent. Ever since the ruins of the cities of Mohenjodaro and Harappa were excavated, it has been recognized that our concept of the political history of India is out-moded. In the past-India was usually the object, not the subject of history. The excavations have proved, in defiance of all prejudices, that an extremely impressive Indian civilization existed as early as the third millenium B. C. Although the people of that civilization had relations with other ancient cultures, their own way of life displayed a distinctly independent character. What is true of Indian culture in general

must also be true of ancient Indian Medicine during the millenia before the birth of Christ.

The hygienic arrangements found in the ruins of Mohenjodaro, Harappa or Lothial probably surpass anything of the sort that has been excavated in Egypt or Mesopotamia says Howard Bentley. He commented "In the ancient civilizations of the Nile and of Mesopotamia, Hygienic installations and regulations were associated with the development of medicine. We have been struck by the surprisingly advanced state of Egyptian Medicine, although Egyptian hygiene was inferior to that of early India. The conclusion seems inescapable that in Mohenjodaro and Harappa there must have been physicians at least the equalls in skill and knowledge of their Egyptian and Mesopotamian contemporaries. The conviction remains that skilled healers must have been at work in India long before the invasion of Aryan Hindus."

The history of medicine of any group of people is intimately interlaced with the history of their progress in other fields also. A rational approach to a study of this subject requires therefore an investigation of the background and origin of the people themselves.

The South Indians are like the people around the mediterranean mainly caucasians though at a later date there might have been an admixture with both mongoloid and Negroid races. Ethnological evidences discussed in detail by A. C. Hodden in his treatise on "The races of men and their distributions", and by E. Thurston, in "castes and Tribes of southern India", point to the medi terranean race as the ancestors of the Dravidians. This has also been confirmed by N. Lahovary in "Dravidian

Origins and the West", who has concluded that Dravidian is the survivor of an incorporating or polysynthetic family of Peri-mediterranean and Pre-Hamito semitic languages which stretched some five or six thousand years ago without a break over a vast zone of the Near East. He has expressed his belief that the ancestors of the Dravidans also emigrated from Mesopotamia some time in the course of the 4th millennium.

According to Heine-Gelden also the Dravidians reached India from Mesopotamia in the 4th millenium bringing a civilization of the painted pottery period.

J. H. Hutton also thinks that the Dravidians originally came from Asia Minor after a long stage in Mesopotamia. Before the drifling away of the continents, geologically, some feel that, India must have been more contiguous with Africa. On the evidence of very close affinities between plants and animals, in Africa and India, R. D. Oldhame in his "Manual of the Geology of India" concludes that at one time South India was continuous with Africa. This view is quite tenable in accordance with Tamil literary evidence also, as in the earliest literature, like (1) Sikandiar, who is the author of a Treatise on music in Tamil, major portion of which text is now lost, except for a few oft-quoted verses, and in (2) Kari Kizhar in puram verse-6-the southern boundary of Tamilnad is referred to as a river with sweet water. There is also mention of a wide extent of land which was lost in a deluge. More important still, mention is made of a different people who spoke a different tongue beyond the river.

*Ref:— Ilampooranar (Oldest of the commentators).*

KADAL KOLVATHANMUN PIRA NADUM UNMAIYIN

TAERKUM ELLAI KOORAPATTATHU, KIZHAKUM MERKUM PIRANADU INMAYIN ELLAI KOORAPADAVAYINA.

*which means —*

Because of the existence of other countries prior to the deluge of the land a southern boundary has been mentioned. But as there were no lands on the East or West no boundaries have been mentioned for these.

In some of the other verses as in Mullai kali, verse-4 and Ilangovadigal's Kadu Kaan Kaathai (lines 17-22) also these is reference to this deluge. However, in all later literature, the southern limit of Tamilaham, is always spoken of as the ocean-as in "Venir Kaathai" -first two lines.

According to one view the Dravidians are said to have migrated from their original home near the mediterranean along the continuous land mass of Asia and North India to South India, being pushed by the fresh invading hordes of the Indo-Aryans from the north. In proof of this theory, they point, to the existence of tribes with tongues related to Dravidian languages all along the way as the Brahuis of Balucistan, the Malers of the Chota Nagpur, the Ghonds and khonds and the Bhils of central India, and to the conclusions drawn by Dr. Wheeler on his excavations in Mohenjadaro.

While, the extent and location of the land, from where the Dravidians originally came from, in prehistoric times, is a matter for conjecture, we are on surer ground regarding the boundaries of Tamilaham in historic times.

References to the boundaries have been made by several poets, the earliest of these being that of Panamparanar in his prologue to a grammar and by Kurunkozhiyur Kizhar in puram verse 17. Both have said that the Tamilaham of their days extended east and west from sea to sea and in the North and south from Venkatam to Kumari.

This area was divided into three principal kingdoms and the limits of the three kingdoms have been given by poets of yore like Auvvai and Pugazhenthi. Accordingly, the Pandya kingdom extended to the south, from River Vellar, which river runs through the modern district of Pudukkottai and falls into the sea, south of point calamere, into Bay of Bengal. The Chola kingdom extended north of Vellar to Venkatam. (The word Venkatam in Tamil means hot hills). The Chera kingdom extended from Palni in the north, Calicut in the west, Seashore in the south and Shencottah in the east.

These were the lands, and these the kings whose people spoke the language of Tamil.

The history of Tamil language and literature may conveniently be divided into three periods namely (1) the early tamil–comprising the period before Christ and a few centuries after Christ. (2) the medeival tamil occupying the period from about the 5th century A.D. to 12th century A.D. and the (3) modern tamil extending from the 13th century down to the present times.

The literature of the early tamil period can easily be separated from the rest by its peculiarities. The characteristics are distinct. (1) There is an absence of words of foreign origin (2) The poetry is all simple

blank verse in chaste classic style devoid of rhetorical flourishes (3) The descriptions of events and scenery are all faithful and true to nature. (4) There is no mention of any religion and (5) There is no reference to any mythology even in similes or metaphors.

The medeival tamil embraces the Hindu and Sectarian religious periods of tamil literature. The early literature in this period is characterised by a subdued struggle for predominance between Hinduism on the one hand, and Buddism and Jainism on the other hand.

The literature of this epoch consists of hymns to Siva and Vishnu and accounts of the life and adventures of Jaina, Siva, Subramanya, Rama and Krishna. Sanskrit words chiefly relating to religion seem to have found acceptance in literary works. Embellishments and exaggeration were considered literary excellence.

The third or recent period in Tamil literature which commenced from about the thirteenth century started really as a dark period. The three ancient Tamil kingdoms were subverted and a Telugu empire was coming into existence, followed by Maratta and Muslim invasions. The royal encouragement which the literary bards had received earlier was absent and original work of any kind was sporadic and far between. The Tamils never recovered from these set backs because immediately in their wake came the Europeam occupation of South India. With the changes in government, religion and social customs many tamil words seen in earlier literature went out of use. In addition to the religious words of sanskritic origin we find the introduction of a number of words of Arabic, Persian

or English origin, particularly with reference to administrative machinery, introduced into tamil.

Based on these and other evidence presented by other tamil research scholars most of the important works in tamil literature have been classified in a chronological order. Attempt has been made to decipher the age and importance of the few reference that could be spotted in literature.

**Table - I.**

**Evolution of Tamil literature.**

| Approximate period. | Religion | Literature | Language |
|---|---|---|---|
| PRIOR TO | PRE-SECTARIAN | ACADEMIC | EARLY GRAMMAR |
| B. C. 200 | | Tholkappiam<br>Kural<br>Puranaanuru<br>Aganaanuru<br>Eattuthogai<br>Pattupaattu | Tholkappiam |
| B. C. 200<br>to | BUDHIST<br>and | CLASSIC | EARLY GRAMMAR |
| A. D. 500 | JAIN | Silapadikaram<br>Manimekalai | Tholkappiam |
| A. D. 500<br>to | HINDU<br>(Brahmanical) | HYMNAL | MEDIEVAL GRAMMAR |
| A. D. 950 | | Thevaaram<br>Thiruvaasagam<br>Thiruvaimozhi | Kalladam<br>Veerasoliam<br>Thandialankaram |
| A. D. 950<br>to | SECTERIAN<br>(Vaishnavite | TRANSLATIONS | MEDEIVAL GRAMMAR |

| Vpproximate period, | Religion | Literature | Language |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A. D. 1200 | and Saivite) | Kamba Ramayanam Kachiappar's Kandapuranam | Kalladam Veerasoliam Thandialankaram |
| A. D. 1200 to | Reformatory | EXEGETICAL | MODERN GRAMMAR |
| A. D. 1450 | | Commentaries like Nachinaarkiniyar Adiyarkunallar Parimelazhagar | Veerasoliam Nannool |
| A. D. 1450 to | MODERN | MISCELLANEOUS | MODERN GRAMMAR |
| A. D. 1900 | | Development of prose styles prose Dramas and poetry | Nannool |
| A. D. 1906 onwards | MODERN | Adoption of Western thoughts | MODERN GRAMMAR Nannool Arumuga Navalar |

The works that have been listed in table-I do not exhaust all the available titles of published books. It is only a representative table showing the titles of 2 or 3 books under each heading which will be typical of that period. Again some of the books would be difficult to classify. Thirukural for instance, is not really non-religions. There is mention of one absolute God. But there is no mention of any organised religion. Similarly Silapadikaram is very chaste as far as language is

considered, but there is mention of temples to all the Gods of Hindu, Buddist and Jain traditions and there are different characters in these classics who follow different religions living side by side. This classification that has been presented is not my original but agrees well with the accepted ideas of Tamil scholars of repute.

An attempt has been made to scan the literature and it is necessary to explain before proceeding further that this study is neither exhaustive nor even chronologically systematic. This is only a preliminary attempt which to be made complete will require sustained application for several years.

The tendency of any beginner in such a study is to turn to the books on medicine first. But unfortunately most of these books give no indication whatever of their age or antiquity. Many of these authors are also sages and in the same work they talk about religion and medicine together talking in the same breath about diseases of the body and diseases of the soul. Thirumoolar is said to be the most ancient amongst these sages and several works have been attributed to him. The most important of his works is "Thirumandiram" which covers a wide variety of subjects like the straight path of life, the means to reach God, the rule of destiny with an incidental admixture of medicinal practises. Many tamil scholars have made various conjectures regarding the antiquity of this sage. Some claim that he lived 3000 years ago, while others believe that he lived in the 5th century A.D. Loking at the literary style one would have the tendency to put the sage only in A.D. because there are number of words of sanskritic origin in his works with some references to mythological beliefs.

In his treatises we come across the theory of the "Three humors". According to him there are 72,000 nerves in the body out of which 10 are principal nerves. Interesting is Thirumoolar's defenition of medicine. As the stanza runs

medicine means the prevention of bodily illness
medicine means the prevention of mental illness
medicine's purpose is to avert discease
medicine therefore is the prevention of death.

*Quoting the original stanza in tamil it reads as follows:*

MARUPPATHU UDAL NOI MARUNTHENALĀGUM

MARUPPATHU ULLA NOI MARUNTHENALĀGUM

MARUPPATHU INI NOI VĀRĀTHIRUKKA

MARUPPATHU SAVAI MARUNTHENALĀME

They seem to have realised most rationally that prevention is better than cure and that prevention should be the main purpose of medicine.

Another stanza which is also attrributed to Thirumoolar, but the authorship of which is not very certain is one which concerns the method of examination of a patient. Translated into English it would be,

By the pulse, By voice and touch as ancients said
By the elongated eyes and the indications of the tongue
By the tired body, stools and urine
Thy can easily know the affecting disease.

*The original verse in tamil reads thus,*

NĀDIAL, MUNNOR SONNA NALLOLI PARISATHALUM

NEEDIYA VIZHIYINALUM, NINDRA NAKKURIPPINALUM

VĀDIYA MENIYALUM MALAMODU NEERINĀLUM

SOODIA VIYATHI THANNAI SUGAMUDAN ARINDU PĀRE

This appears to be the earliest explicit mention of examination of pulse. Even though the word (NĀDI) is used in the chapter on medicine in Thirukural, the actual meaning of the word in the particular context in Thirukural is not pulse.

There are a number of verses said to have been composed by Agathiyar. According to the pandits of Siddha Medicine itself there seems to have been several Agathiyars who lived at different ages. In addition several spurious claims to Agathiyar's name also have been made by mediocre composers. None of these works in literary style appear to be very ancient nor very original. They are all of the nature of materia medica or pharmacognosy with some discriptions about the techniques of preparation.

The works of Theraiyar are of a later date. The age and authenticity of Theraiyar's works are more precisely known. Theraiyar lived in the 15th century and his works contain more sophisticated methods for preparation of medicines like thailams (Liniments), Sindoorams (Powders) and pills and confections.

*Table–II. Medical compositions attributed to* Aga *(s)-thiyar.*

1. Agathiyar Perunthirattu
2. Agathiyar Irupathorayiram
3. Agathiyar Irandayiram

4: Mani Noolayiram
5. Sendooram Munnooru
6. Karisal
7. Vaidya Sinthamani
8. Vaidya Kaviyam

*Table III. Medical Works of Theraiyar (15th Century)*

1. Sigamani Venba
2. Naan Malai
3. Vaithiya Pallu
4. Neer Nirakuri
5. Neikuri
6. Noimarunthalavai
7. Thaila Varukacharukkam
8 Therer Vaidyam

*Table IV. Medical Works – Collections of Several Authors (Dates Uncertain)*

1. Pathinenchithar Balavagadam
2. Pathinenchithar Chillaraikovai

Some of the contributors to these works are

3. Ahappai Chithar
4. Chattai Muni
5. Konganavar
6. Pampatti Chithar
7. Pulipani
8. Ramathevar
9. Uroma Muni.

The Table–IV which includes the names of authors of a collection of compositions called Pathinen-chithar's work is an assortment of verses brought together at a later date by the compilers. The 18 chithars might not have been contemporaries. In the Table only 14 names have been mentioned. Amongst the remaining four three are Thirumoolar, Agathiyar and Bogar. The last name is yakobu, and strangely enough an introductory account in the book, says that yakobu, is none other than Rama Thevar himself, who went to Mecca and returned a Muslim, and then wrote his verses under the name of Yakobu.

There is a lot of admixture of fables, and facts in these introductory chapters that it is difficult to draw conclusions from any of these statements. However this is an interesting collection because Balavaagadam means paediatrics and the other chillarai kovai is a miscellanceous collection on such subjects as Toxicology, antidotes for poisons, types of poisonous snakes and remedies for snake bites etc ,. Even this collection does not help us very much in determining either the antiquinty or the source of any of their medical practices. The last table in this series gives the titles of some of the compositions unearthed by various devoted seekers and compiled and published comparatively recently by the efforts of public and private bodies. This list may not be complete.

In addition to all these, an authentic compilation is Sarabendra Ratnavali published by Saraswathi Mahal of Thanjavur. This is probably a publication of selected data from Sarabendra Vaidya Murai compiled by several workers instigated by Saraboji Raja who ruled Thanja-

vur from 1798 to 1832. This account is a mixture of both Ayur-vedic and Siddha remedies and does not indicate the origin of either of these systems.

From the condensed account of some of the Tamil medicinal works that has already been placed before you it will be clear that it is very difficult to draw any conclusions regarding the source and development of the system of medicine prevalent in South India.

The pecularity of the system of Siddha Medicine as compared to Ayur-veda is the greater practice of metallurgy in the former. Metallurgy is said to have originated in the mediteranean coast.

If the evidences, that have been put forward to suggest, that the ancestors of the Tamils themselves, migrated at a prehistoric time, from the mediterranean coast to South India, are accepted then it may not be surprising, that some such information was part of their ancient tradition, which could have been further developed here. In the early historic times, even if India was not a continuous land mass with Africa, it would appear, that the sea separating these land masses was narrower, and much more easily navigable for small boats, than it is to-day. The fact is that as far as Tamilaham is concerned, trade and intercourse with mediterranean countries seem to have been very common once. Not only have the archeology department dug out Roman coins of antiquity in South Indian seashore towns, but we have to-day living with us the descendants from a number of waves of emigrators from the mediterranean who came directly to South India,

The Syrian Christians of Kerala had come by sea to settle on the west coast from their original homeland near the mediterranean. The Zorastrians have come by sea to settle again in the west coast near Bombay, forced out by the spread of Islam in their homeland of persia.

From all this it appeared that it may be useful to turn to general literature to pickup some references to medicine. In this attempt I cannot claim that I have made any outstanding progress, which might contribute evidence, to establish the origin and antiquity of the medical practice of this land. However, it is still interesting to know, that references to herbs and healers occur, even in the earliest literature of Tamilnad.

Tholkappiam is one of the oldest of Tamil works. Based on internal and external evidences of literature and history, all tamil scholars are agreed that it was in existence prior to the third Sangam, and that it was composed and submitted to one of the earlier academies-either the 1st or 2nd which would put it defenitely before the 5th century B. C. In this grammar verse 112 – he described the different types of conventional poetic invocational addresses one of which is "Vaayurai Vazhthu". In his defenition of vaayurai vazhthu which is a type of address, containing ethical or moral advice to readers, he refers to two bitter herbs. He says that the two herbs vembu and kadu are both bitter to start with, but bring good to the body ultimately. Similarly words which might not be pleasant to hear at the time of their utterance, but which will still benefit generations of humanity – such words only constitute vaayurai vazhthu.

*The Tamil verse reads as follows :-*

VAAYURAI VAZHTE VAYANGA NADIN VEMBUM KADUVUM POLA

THANGUTHAL INDRI VAZHI NANI PAYAKKUM

ENDRU OMBADAI KILAVIYIN VAAYURUTHATRE.

Two other older works in Tamil are the Purananooru and Agananooru. Each is a collection of 400 verses composed by several poets who lived at different times, some probably before and some after Tholkappiar. For the benefit of those who do not know Tamil - these two titles could be translated into English as "Heroics–Four hundred" and "Erotics-Four hundred". The heroics four hundred or the Puram Nanooru is a collection of Eulogies sung by bards in praise of the acheivements of their kings or chieftains and the Erotics Four hundred or Aham Nanooru refers to verses sung in praise of lovers. Some of the puram verses can easily be deduced to be of very great antiquity because they refer to cities and rivers which existed south of the river Thambraparni in the pre–deluge Pandinad and of chieftains and kings of fabled fame. In these collections interestingly enough we find that one of the poets is by profession a doctor and to distinguish him from others he is specifically referred to as Maruthuvan Damotharan wherever his name occurs.

Thirukural is among the early works of the third Sangam literature and Thiruvalluvar has allocated one chapter made up of 10 couplets to medicine. The first kural in this chapter on medicine reminds one, of the theory of three humors in medicine.

*The kural reads thus:*

MIKINUM KURAIYINUM NOY SEYYUM - NOOLOR
VALI MUTHALA ENNIYA MOONDRU.

It literally means "Excess or lack of one of the three things beginning with flatulence leads to disease as enunciated by medical writers-Vali is air or flatulence and the phrase "VALI MUTHALA ENNIYA MOONDRU" is generally believed by Tamil commentators to refer to flatulence, biliousness and phlegm. It is interesting that the theory of three humors, or the "Thridosha theory" as Ayurveda describes it, has found its expression in a very ancient literary work which is generally dated back to B.C. makes one really wonder where it started and how it migrated into various systems of medicine all over the world including ancient Chinese Medicine. The reference in this very same kural to the existence of medical works and authors earlier to Thiruvalluvar in the word NOOLOR is rather fascinating because it implies the existence of a well developed concept and literature on medicine prior to Thirukural. A considerable portion of this chapter in kural is devoted to a recommendation of moderation in eating as a means of achieving health and longevity. But the last three couplets in this chapter make specific references to such matters of interest to us, as diagnosis, treatment and medicine.

*The first of these reads thus.*

NOI NAADI NOI MUTHAL NAADI ATHU THANIKKUM
VAAI NAADI VAAIPPACHEYAL.

which translated into English would mean-Let the nature of the illness be enquired into first, then its origin and

cause and then the methods of amelioration be sought and let treatment be effected accordingly.

*The next kural which reads in the original as*

UTRĀN ALAVUM PINI ALAVUM KĀĀLAMUM
KATRAN KARUTHI CHEYAL.

translated in to English would reads as

Let the condition of the patient and the nature of the disease and the time and hour be considered well by the learned man before he proceeds to treat.

The word katran literally means learned man and in this context has been used by the author to refer to the doctor.

*The last couplet in this chapter which reads in Tamil as*

UTRAVAN THEERPAN MARUNDU UZHAICHELVAN ENDRU
APPAR NAARKOOTRE MARUNDU.

These lines when translated into English would convey to us that medical science is made up of four component parts namely–the afflicted, the healer, the medicine and the attendant.

That woinds up kural and other works can be considered now. Some of the early tamil literary works of the third Sangam have been named after herbal medicines. There are three works entitled-Thirikadugam, Siru Pancha Moolam and Eelathi respectively. Thirikadugam in tamil means a combination of sukku, (Dried ginger) milagu (Dried Pepper) and Thippili (Pipper Longum). The book is supposed to contain such words of advice and solace that are capable of healing the

afflictions of the mind and soul as Thirikadugam heals the afflictions of the body.

*Panchamoolam is a combination of 5 herbs namely:*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| KANDANKATHIRI | — | Solanum Tacquini |
| SIRUVAZHUTHUNAI | — | Solanum Indicum |
| SIRUMALLI | — | Coriander |
| PERUMALLI and | — | VARIETY OF JASMINE |
| NERUNJI | — | TRIBULUS TERRESTRIS. |

Verses in SIRUPANCHAMOOLAM usually contain 5 laws of ethics incorporated in each piece and hence named after the medical mixture of 5 herbs.

The word ELATHI in Tamil similarly signifies a collection of 6 remedies namely (ELAM) CARDAMOM

| | |
|---|---|
| (ILAVANGAM) | Eugenia caryophyllata |
| (THAKKOLAM) | English term not known |
| (MILAGU) | Pepper |
| (THIPPILI) | Piper Longum |
| (SUKKU) | Dried Ginger |

and most of these verses contain 6 moral codes enunciated in each verse.

Kalithogai is another tamil work which precedes the religious period of tamil literature and is classified into different sections according to the terrain and people and their customs about whom the verses are sung. One section of this which is Paalaikali contains a reference to the use of medicine in a simile. In verse 17 in Paalaikali the poet perumkadungo says that the medicines given by a doctor will reach the afflicted

portion of the body quickly and act well only if the body had also been preserved well by prior good and ethical living.

The age of the epic drama Silapadikaram can be fixed, fairly definitely because, in the book, there is mention of all the three kings who ruled Chera, Chola and Pandya kingdoms as contemporaries, with details about their names, acheivements and capitols. The Author Ilangovadigal himself is the brother of the Chera king–Chenguttuvan. The Chera king journeyed with his troops to the north, incidentally winning some battles on his way, to bring a granite block from Himalayas, which he washed in Ganges and brought to his kingdom, out of which he had the idol of Kannagi the personification of chastity, carved, and had a temple erected. For the jubilations and ceremonies conducted to honour and celebrate the completion of the temple several neighbouring kings were invited, and king Kayavagu of Ceylon was one of those present as mentioned in detail in Silapadikaram itself. From all these it appears fairly definite that Silapadikaram was completed in 2nd century A. D. In that period, already the science of Aurveda had spread to the south and there is mention of allocation of a place within the precinicts of the city for the residence of the practitioners of Aurveda.

In Indra Vizha Vooredutha Kaathai in Silapadikaram in lines 44 in describing the city of Kaviripoompattinam the author says that the city was divided into 2 major portions, called Maṛuvoor packam and Pattinapackam. In Pattinapackam–was the residence of the King, the important merchants and land–lords and this

area also contained the residences of the astrologers and doctor. While describing these he makes a specific mention of the existence of the residences of Ayurvedic practioners as

KOVIAN VEETHIYUM KODITHER VEETHIYUM
PEEDIKAI THERUVUM PERUNGUDI VANIGAR
MADA MARUGUM MARAIYOR IRUKKAIYUM
VEEZHKUDI UZHAVARODU VILANGIYA KOLGAI
**AYUL VETHARUM** KAALAKANITHARUM "

Perhaps in the same century the classic poetical work of Manimekalai was composed. In this we see the mixture of healing and superstition together. The verse refers to alleviation of afflictions by men with magical powers.

EETRILAM PENDIR, AATRA PALAKAR
KADUM SUL MAKALIR, NEDUM PUN UTROR
THANTHUYAR KEDUKKUM MANDIRA MAAKAL

(Lines 81 to 83 in THUYILEZHU KAATAAI)

Which literally means "The magical people who remove the sorrow of recently delivered women, suffering children, women with difficult pregnancies and people with chronic nonhealing ulcers."

From 2nd century we move further on. In a book entitled Thiruvalluva maalai which consists of verses sung bv several bards in praise of Thiruvalluvar and his work, there is a reference to a headache remedy.

SEENDI NEERKANDAM THERI SUKKU THENALAI
MONTHA PIN YARKUM THALAIKUTHU IL.

Cheendi is a climbing plant. The author says that an admixture of the herbs SEENDI, NEERKANDAM and powdered SUKKU in Honey-if smelt will relieve headache.

Aasaarakkovai is again another tamil work which has to be dated after the early Sangam works but probably preceded the Sectarian religious periods in tamil literature. This book deals with the proper ways of living like " how to bathe ", " how and when to eat ", " how and when to sleep ". " how and when to meditate or pray " etc., and embodies certain medeival concepts of hygiene.

The archeology department of the Government of India have unearthed a few stone cutting in places like Thanjavur, Thirumukkodal and Kundrathoor. The stone etchings are dated in the 12th and 13th centuries and give an account of the establishment of infirmaries which were known in tamil as AATHULA SAALAI and the carved letters give an account of the inam of lands to these institutions for their maintenance, and they were directed to pay a proportion of this income to the doctors and attendants.

Prior to the 12th century, no reference to surgery in tamil could be found but the study is not sufficiently thorough. The first reference that could be seen is in Kambar's Ramayanam where in he has said

UDALIDAI THONDRITTU ONDRAI
ARUTHU ATHAN UTHIRAM MAATRI
SUDAL URA CHUTTU VEROR
MARUNTHINAL THUYARAM THEERVAR

The above reference is in Kumbakarna Vathai padalam, Translated into English it would be -

"an unwanted tissue born of the body can be excised, its blood removed, the tissue burnt and the afflication healed with another medicine."

Another reference to surgery comes in Naalayira prabhandam. This work is made up of Vaishnavite devotional songs and in a simile the poet says.

VAALAL ARUTHU CHUDINUM MARRUTHUVAN PAL
MALAATHA KAATHAL NOYALI POL.

Which translated into English would be - " like the patient who has enduring love for the doctor even when the latter had cut with a blade and burnt."

This work actually brings us to about the 14 or 15th century and beyond this period a number of minor classical and nonclassical works have mushroomed in tamil literature. Whether these will stand the test of time is yet unknown. It would be impossible for any one to go into detail into all these works which if under taken would require a team to work continiuously for at least 5 years.

Hence I content myself to conclude with this.

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